

The effects of visual servicescapes elements on consumer-retailer relationship formation

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ABSTRACT

The effects of visual servicescapes elements on consumer-retailer relationship formation

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The effects of the retail environment on consumer perceptions and behaviors have been widely discussed. Recent research indicated that visual servicescapes of a retail environment affect consumers' attitudes toward the retailer and the servicescapes, consumers' perceptions of self-image congruity with the retailer, and consumers' involvement with the retailer. The visual servicescapes also influence the formation of consumer-retailer relationships, which can be characterized as "perfect matches," "mismatches," "fair-weather friends," "best friends," and "acquaintances." The purpose of the current research is threefold: (1) Building on recent quantitative findings, it develops a scale to measure the five consumer-retailer relationship types; (2) it empirically tests which visual servicescapes dimension has the most influence on the formation of consumer-retailer relationship; and (3) it seeks to replicate earlier findings regarding the effects of the visual servicescapes on consumers' attitude toward a retailer, consumers' self-image congruity with the retailer, and consumers' involvement with the retailer.

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1. Introduction

Recognizing the significant impacts of retail environment on consumers' perceptions and responses, researches in marketing indicate that the physical retail environment affects consumers' perceptions of the service experience (Baker et al., 1992), satisfaction (Bitner, 1990), time spent in store (Grossbart et al. 1990), product choice (Buckley, 1991), and purchasing behavior (De Mozota, 1990).

A recent research suggests that the effect of visual aspects of the retail environment (visual retail servicescapes, hereinafter referred to as VRS) also extends to the formation of consumer-retailer relationships (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013). Findings of work conducted by Breazeale and Ponder (2013) indicate that VRS facilitate the development of connections between consumers and retailers. These authors carried out exploratory research to identify five types of consumer-retailer relationship, and then conducted a quantitative follow up study in which they related self-image congruity scale and RetailQ score (i.e., familiarity level of consumers with retailers) to shed more light on consumers' reactions to the VRS in terms of how consumers connect their self-concept with retailers based on the VRS and the level of involvement that consumers exhibit in response to the VRS. They found that VRS influence consumers' attitudes and consumers' involvement with a retailer. Moreover, they detected five distinctively different types of consumer-retailer relationship ("perfect matches", "mismatches", "fair-weather friends", "best friends" and "acquaintances"), and found that respondents based on their evaluation of the relationship with the retailer upon the VRS. Furthermore, the results showed that VRS have clear influences on respondents' sense of self-image congruence (SIC) and their attitudes toward the retailer and other patrons. Thus, VRS act as means of communicating retailers' personality. In line with recent research that investigates the influence

of retail settings on involvement (Liang and Wang, 2008; Puccinelli et al., 2009), they found that retail settings could facilitate consumers' involvement (Breazeale & Ponder, 2013). Another finding of this research is that consumers' involvement increases along with consumers' perceptions of SIC in response to the VRS.

However, the lack of specific demonstration of which dimensions of visual servicescapes affect consumers' internal responses and behaviors would provide retailers with no practical use. They would not have an idea of how to change the store settings to induce better impressions, attitudes, and favorable behaviors toward their stores. Bitner (1992) divided physical surroundings of retailer into three categories: ambient conditions (e.g.: music, scent, lighting, and etc.), spatial, layout, and functionality (e.g.: layout, furniture arrangement, and etc.), and signs, symbols, and artifacts (e.g.: direction signs, department symbols, and etc.). Thus, this research considers the influence of ambient factors, spatial, layout, and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts in servicescapes on the formation of consumer-retailer relationship, consumers' perceptions of SIC, consumers' attitudes toward the retailer and the servicescapes, and consumers' involvement. This research also develops a scale measuring the five types of consumer-retailer relationship proposed in the content analysis of Breazeale and Ponder (2013). The purpose of the current research is to extend the research of Breazeale and Ponder's (2013) study in a quantitative way.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Retail Atmosphericity

From the 1970s onward, researchers have recognized the importance of retail atmosphericity. Kotler (1973) defined retail atmosphericity as the conscious design of the retail environment to induce positive emotional responses among consumers and subsequently influence consumers'

purchase intention. Kotler (1973) suggested employing atmospherics as marketing tool and argued that the atmosphere of a retail environment has more influence on consumers' decision-makings than the products or services retailers carry. In 1992, Bitner introduced the notion of servicescapes, and defined it as the man-made physical surroundings that allow for maximum projection of a retailer's offering.

While retail servicescapes are made of tangible and intangible factors, the visual factors affect consumers to a greater extent than any other factors due to their immediate accessibility (Lurie and Mason, 2007). In daily life, people receive complex information that consists of numbers and text. Moreover, processing information requires enormous efforts and rule-based reasoning, so it is important for consumers to abstract value and meaning rapidly from retail servicescapes (Sloman and Shi, 1996). Consumers abstract values and meanings using visual skills. The highly developed human visual skills enable people to detect edges and discontinuities, things that stand out, variation in color and shape, and motion, to recognize patterns, and to retrieve information using visual cues (Kosslyn, 1994). Moreover, consumers see servicescapes before other relevant cues can be processed (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013)

The impact of the physical environment or servicescapes has been widely studied. The findings from this field of research have demonstrated that physical surroundings have an impact on consumers' perceptions and behaviors. VRS stimuli have an effect on sales (McKinnon et al., 1981; Wilkinson et al., 1982), consumers' perceptions (Bellizzi et al., 1983), consumer satisfaction (Andrus, 1986; Pinto and Leonidas, 1994), unplanned purchases (Lyer, 1989; Park et al., 1989; Donovan et al., 1994), product evaluations (Obermiller and Bitner, 1989), purchase intention (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992), mood (Chebat et al., 1993), amount of time spent in the store (Areni and Kim, 1994), perceived merchandise and service quality, store image (Baker et al.,

1994), emotional responses (Ward and Eaton, 1994), perceived product quality (Chebat et al., 1995), and price perceptions (Smith and Burns, 1996). There are two frameworks summarizing the effects of servicescapes on consumer responses that frequently cited. One is Bitner's (1992) servicescapes framework; the other is Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) approach-avoidance framework.

2.2 The Bitner's Servicescapes Framework

Retail environmental cues affect consumers' internal responses and behaviors. Bitner (1992) identified three dimensions of servicescapes: ambient conditions, spatial, layout, and functionality of the physical surroundings, and signs, symbols and artifacts. Ambient conditions, which affect the five senses, include background characteristics of the retail environment such as temperature, lighting, noise, music, and scent. Ambient conditions can alter consumers' perceptions and responses toward the retail environment. Spatial, layout and functionality dimension is defined by Bitner (1992, P66) as:

“Spatial layout refers to the way that machinery, equipment, and furniture are arranged, the size and shape of those item, and the spatial relationships among them. Functionality refers to the ability of the same items to facilitate performance and the accomplishment of goals.”

Spatial layout and functionality are easily manipulated to facilitate the provision of service.

Signs, symbols, and artifacts give implicit cues to consumers about meanings, images, norms, and expectations of the place. The dimensions discussed by Baker (1987) are consistent with ambient factors in Bitner's (1992) servicescapes framework. Baker's (1987) dimensions also include design factors, which are similar to Bitner's (1992) space and functionality dimension, functional and aesthetic elements, such as architecture, style, and layout, and social factors, which are the “people” component of the retail environment (such as, employees).

According to Bitner (1992), consumers' internal responses to servicescapes consist of cognitive response, affective response, and physiological responses. Consumers' behaviors arise from these internal responses. Perceived servicescapes elicit cognitive responses in the sense that they influence consumers' beliefs, categorization of a retailer, and perceptions of the symbolic meanings of the retailer. Moreover, perceived servicescapes may induce emotional responses in terms of consumers' mood states, and their attitudes toward a retailer. Furthermore, perceived servicescapes can also lead to physiological responses such as pain, comfort, and movement. Behavioral responses to servicescapes include individual behaviors (i.e., similar to Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) approach-avoidance behaviors) and social interactions that occur between the customers and employees. In Bitner's (1992) research, social interactions are viewed as outcomes of the consumer/employee/environment interaction and not as environmental stimuli. However, a large amount of studies showed that the presence of other consumers would also play an important role as part of retail environment (Parker and Ward, 2000; Lau and Ng, 2001).

2.3 The Approach-Avoidance Framework

Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) approach-avoidance framework has been widely used to explain the influence of retail environment on consumer behaviors. This framework builds on an environmental psychology perspective. The model is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm that proposes that environmental stimuli (S) influence emotional states (O) that in turn influence consumers' behavioral responses (R). The behavioral responses in this model can be classified as approach or avoidance (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The authors classified emotional states along three dimensions: pleasure, arousal, and dominance. Bakker et al. (2014) suggested that Mehrabian and Russell conceived pleasure as a continuum ranging from extreme pain or unhappiness to extreme happiness (e.g., pleasant-unpleasant). Arousal was

conceived as a mental activity describing the state of feeling along a single dimension ranging from sleep to excitement (e.g., stimulated-relaxed, excited-calm, wide awake- sleepy).

Dominance relates to feelings of control and the extent to which an individual feels restricted in his or her behavior. Dominance was treat as continuum ranging from dominance to submissiveness (e.g., controlling, influential, autonomous, and surrender).

Donovan and Rossiter (1982) developed the following responses taxonomy to describe avoidance and approach behaviors: (1) the desire to physically stay in or leave the retail environment (related to store patronage intention); (2) the willingness to explore the retail environment or tendency to remain inanimate with the surroundings (related to consumers' expositions to in-store searching and range of merchandise); (3) the desire to communicate with others in the store or tendency to avoid any interaction with others (related to social interaction); (4) the degree of enhancement or hindrance that the retail environment gives to solving problems (related to consumers' satisfaction, repeat patronage behavior, time and money spend in the store).

2.4 Self-image Congruence

The need to explore affective variables such as image congruency in retail settings was recognized by Barnes (1998). He found that affective variables are more influential in nurturing close and satisfying customer relationship than are situational and behavioral variables.

Self-congruity is defined as the extent to which a consumer's self-concept matches the personality of a typical user of a brand or retailer (Helgeson and Supphellen, 2004). Self-concept is generally construed from a multidimensional perspective (Rosenberg, 1979). Actual self refers to how a person perceives himself/herself; ideal self refers to how a person would like to perceive himself/herself; social self refers to how a person presents himself/herself to others.

The current research focuses on the actual self-concept and the ideal self-concept because these two perspectives focus on consumers' self-perception. Moreover, self-congruity theory proposed that a consumer's behavior is partially determined by congruence resulting from a psychological comparison of the image of self and the image of a brand or a store that reflect a typical user of the brand or store (Sirgy et al, 1997). High self-congruity occurs when a brand or store's user image is perceived to match a consumer's own self-image. Low self-congruity occurs when a consumer perceives there is no or a minimal level of fit between a brand or store's user image and the consumer's self-image (O'Cass and Lim, 2002). By using a brand or purchasing at a store, consumers define, maintain, and enhance their self-concept (Zinkhan and Hong, 1991). Furthermore, consumers prefer to shop in a store with a retail environment that matches their self-concept (Yim et al., 2007). Empirical results indicated that consumers' perceptions of self-congruity are significantly influenced by store image dimensions such as atmosphere, merchandise, price, and promotion (Chebat et al, 2009). Store image is an important concept in the retailing literature. It is defined as a shopper's perception of a store based on the store's functional and psychological attributes (Chebat et al., 2006). Functional attributes are concrete, tangible, and observable attributes such as type and quality of the store's products, the opening hours of the store, and location of the store. Psychological attributes are abstract intangible and unobservable attributes such as store atmospherics, and types of patrons in the store (Chebat et al., 2006). Research has explored the impact of store image on store satisfaction, store commitment, word-of-mouth, purchase intention (Bloemer and Oderkerken-Schroder, 2002), store loyalty (D'Astous and Levesque, 2003), and product perceptions (D'Astous and Gargouri, 2001). Studies showed that congruence between self-image and store image affects store preference and loyalty (Bellenger et al., 1976; Sirgy et al., 2000). Chebat, Sirgy and

St-James (2006) proposed that consumers detect cues from a store environment and infer from these cues the personal characteristics of the typical patron; then, consumers compare store image with their own self-image. In this way, environmental cues impact to what extent consumers experience self-congruity. Self-congruity, in turn, influences consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward a store

3. Developing Scales for Consumer-Retailer Relationships

3.1 Types of Consumer-Retailer Relationships

According to Breazeale and Ponder (2013), the visual retail servicescapes (VRS) evoke certain types of relationships between retailers and consumers. In exploratory research, they identified five distinct types of consumer-retailer relationships. In a second phase of their research, they used a self-image congruity scale and RetailQ score to quantitatively examine the effect of these relationship types.

Breazeale and Ponder (2013) found five categories of consumer-retailer relationship based on consumers' responses to the VSR: "perfect matches", "mismatches", "fair-weather friends", "best friends", and "acquaintances". "Perfect matches" describe a consumer-retailer relationship as consumers who have high degree of similarity with a retailer, who use positive superlatives (such as best and greatest) to describe their shopping experience with the retailer, who rate the store environment and their attitudes toward the retailer positively, who recognize the retailer's effort, and who express enthusiasm toward the VRS and transfer their affections to other consumers they expect to see in the store (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013). One of the respondents in Breazeale and Ponder's (2013, P842) research encapsulates the attitude of "perfect matches":

"It looks like this store is trying to send a message that they have everything like some of the other BIG retailers but they care enough about their customers to present it in a unique

way. I would expect to see people like me shopping there — people who appreciate value but want something a little more unique than you could find somewhere else. It would make me happy to shop there. It seems like it would be easy to move around and there would be a lot to see. (36 yo married male/Target)”

“Perfect matches” possess a high level of perceived similarity between consumers and a retailer. The consumers describe their shopping experience with the retailer as best or greatest, they find the store inviting or welcoming, they recognize the retailer’s efforts to earn their patronage and to provide good shopping experience, they also find that the surroundings in the store make them feel good, and they take pride being the kind of customer who shops in the store.

“Mismatches” describe a consumer-retailer relationships as consumers who hold negative attitudes toward a retailer, retailer’s consumers, and VRS, who feel overwhelmed and annoyed by their experience with the retailer, who believe the retailer trying to be something more than it can deliver, and who express the lack of similarity with the retailer (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013). One of the respondents in Breazeale and Ponder’s research (2013, P842) lists the unappealing factors of retailer to “mismatches”:

“In my opinion the retailer is trying to convey a sense of nonconformist originality that still fits into a mainstream market. I would feel completely alienated and out-of-place. I would never venture into such a dark, uninviting store. The props and the clothes themselves look like they would be priced at a premium and I much prefer a basic no-frills store. (21 yo single male/Hollister Co.)”

“Mismatches” display a lack of similarity between consumers’ self-perception and the retailer, they think about never return to the store. The consumers are bored and overwhelmed with the retailer, they find that the retailer is trying to be something more than it can actually deliver, they

describe the store as inhospitable, and they hold animosity toward consumers who shop in the store.

“Perfect matches” and “mismatches” arise for consumers who express their feelings more extremely than that of the other three types. “Fair-Weather friends”, “Best friends” and “Acquaintances” are like to use moderate descriptions for their feelings and attitudes; however, the three types are distinctively different from one another according to Breazeale and Ponder (2013).

“Fair-Weather friends” describe a consumer-retailer relationship as consumers who have both positive and negative impressions of a retailer and retailer’s customers, who feel comfortable or at ease in the servicescapes, who have both positive and negative reviews on the consumers who they expect to shop in the store, who focus on the practical aspects of the store, who primarily draw into the store by the VRS, and who enjoy the anticipated shopping experience enough that they would shop in the store even though they have no need on the products that offered (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013). “Fair-Weather friends” find the servicescapes comfortable, they enter the store in spite of negative perceptions of other consumers, they find the store easy to shop, and they enter the store merely because its servicescapes.

“Best friends” describe a consumer-retailer relationship as consumers who show stronger positive attitudes toward VRS and a retailer than “fair-weather friends”, who make comparisons of the store to other retailers, who notice practical aspects as “fair-weather friends” do, who also display the enthusiasm of “perfect matches”, who recognize the VRS delivering broad appeal, and who focus on the practical benefits while also get excited by the extra touches that the retailer exclusively provide (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013). The following respondent summarizes

the practical enthusiasm of “best friends” in Breazeale and Ponder’s research (2013, P843):

“The design of this store is very welcoming. From the minute you would walk in the door, you would be intrigued. They're really successful at drawing the customer's eye toward the products. I think they want you to feel at home. I would expect to get a lot for my money here and I would feel good knowing they were a reliable company. (50 yo married male/Best Buy)”

"Best friends" find the store surroundings welcoming, exciting, cool, amazing, and hopeful, they find this store is better than other store in the same industry, they find the store reliable, organized, and having good quality, and they find the store display broad appeal.

Lastly, “acquaintances” describe a consumer-retailer relationship as consumers who show disinterest toward VRS and a retailer, who offer minimum description of other consumers who are expected to be seen in the store, who seem over stimulated by the store VRS, and who are willing to patronize a store conditionally and briefly (Breazeale and Ponder, 2013).

“Acquaintances” feel nothing when they look around in the store, they find the store uninteresting, cold, or bored, they are disinterested in the typical patron of the store, they patronize the store but only in the necessity and for a brief amount of time.

3.2 Definitions and Measurement of Consumer-Retailer Relationship Types

“Perfect matches,” describe the closest type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers display extremely positive attitudes toward a retailer, the retailer’s physical surroundings, the retailer’s typical patron, and the shopping experience with the retailer, and recognize and confirm the retailer’s efforts. The consumers’ personalities match the personalities of the retailer.

“Best friends” describe the second closest type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers feel hopeful with the physical settings of a retailer; they find the retailer is better than

others; they pay attention to the functionality and benefits offered by the retailer; and they perceive the retailer as appealing to broad categories of consumers.

“Faire-Weather friends” describe the third closest type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers have both positive and negative attitudes toward a retailer and the retailer’s typical patron; however, consumers still show great interest in the retailer’s physical surroundings, and they are willing to patronize the store even though they do not need anything from the retailer.

“Acquaintances” describe the second least close type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers are disinterested in a retailer, the retailer’s physical surroundings, and the retailer’s typical patron. They seem over stimulated by the store’s physical surroundings and they will enter the store conditionally.

“Mismatches,” describe the least close type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers display great negative attitudes toward a retailer, the retailer’s physical surroundings, the retailer’s typical patron and the shopping experience with the retailer. The consumers’ personalities do not match the personalities of the retailer.

Based on the contents of the five consumer-retailer relationship types identified by Breazeale and Ponder (2013), the following scale items were generated. These scale items served as the basis for a scale development study.

Table 1
Scale Items for Consumer-Retailer Relationships

Consumer-retailer Type	Relationship	Items	Scale
Perfect matches		BM1. The retailer's personality is very similar to mine.	7-point Likert scale 1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree
		BM2. The shopping experience in this store will be extremely good.	
		BM3. The store makes an effort to make the servicescapes appealing to me.	
		BM4. The store makes an effort to make me feel good.	
		BM5. The store's surroundings making me feel good.	
		BM6. This store makes me proud to be its customer.	
Mismatches		MIS1. The retailer's personality is different from mine.	7-point Likert scale 1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree
		MIS2. This store makes me not want to return.	
		MIS3. The store's surroundings make me feel bad.	
		MIS4. This retailer tries to be more than it can deliver.	
		MIS5. This store makes me feel like I do not like its consumers.	
Faire-weather friends		FAIR1. The store's surroundings making me feel comfortable.	7-point Likert scale 1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree
		FAIR2. I will shop in this store in spite of other consumer's influences. .	
		FAIR3. The store's product organization allows me to identify the location of products easily	

	FAIR4. The store atmosphere is the reason why I enter this store.	
Best friends	BF1. The store's physical facilities making me feel good.	7-point Likert scale 1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree
	BF2. To me, this store is one of the best in the industry.	
	BF3. To me, this store seems reliable.	
	BF4. This store delivers broad appeal to me.	
Acquaintance	AQ1. This store's surroundings making me feel nothing.	7-point Likert scale 1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree
	AQ2. The store is not appealing to me.	
	AQ3. The store's typical patron doesn't matter to me.	
	AQ4. I will enter the store due to necessity.	
	AQ5. I will not stay in the store for long.	

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants and Procedure

Following Breazeale and Ponder's (2013) research, a photo-elicitation technique (PET) was adopted, which defined as inserting a photograph into a research, interview, or survey (Harper, 2002). The reason why present of an image is better than present of text is because the parts of the brain that process visual information are more evolved than the parts that process verbal information (Harper, 2002). Therefore, images can evoke deeper elements of human consciousness. Furthermore, with visual prompt, PET can result in longer and comprehensive responses (Collier, 1957). Moreover, PET helps ensure all participants have a common point of reference, thus would increase validity and reliability of the study (Collier, 1987).

Five images from five retailers (Wal-Mart, Costco, Shoppers' Drug Mart, Bath and Body Works, and Roots) were used. All of the images were found on the Internet. Wal-Mart, Costco, and Shoppers' Drug Mart were listed in the top 10 companies in the retail industry from the Globe and Mail website. Breazeale and Ponder (2013) also adopted Wal-Mart, and Bath and Body Works in their research due to advertising expenditures and popular press listings. Moreover, all five retailers carry products targeting both men and women. Finally, the five images contain signs and symbols for guidance. The images were pre-processed in the way that the labels of the retailers were removed to avoid recognition of the retailer to preclude familiarity or knowledge effects. Based on the images, the effects of ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts were measured to examine the relative influences of environmental cues on consumer-retailer relationship formation, consumers' attitudes toward servicescapes and the retailer, consumers' perceptions of SIC, and consumers' involvement.

This research included two studies. First, a study including 47 participants was conducted to verify the dimensionality and reliability of the items measuring consumer-retailer relationships. Second, the principal study including 266 participants was carried out to examine the relations between antecedents and consumer-retailer relationships, as well as their outcomes.

In both studies, invalid responses were excluded prior to analyses. The criteria for invalid responses are: (1) participants did not agree to participate; (2) participants were not at age 18 or above; (3) participants did not answer the filter question correctly; (4) participants did not complete the entire questionnaire; (5) participants spent less than 5 minute and 50 seconds to complete the questionnaire. The principal questionnaires were designed using the Qaltrics survey platform. The questionnaires were distributed through Corwdflower, which is an online panel for research. All the participants were recruited from North America (Unites States and Canada).

4.2 Measurement

Both studies included the following measures. Self-image congruity construct measurement is introduced by Sirgy et al (1997), and proved its applicability in Helgeson and Supphellen's (2004) non-food retailing context. Consumers' attitudes to retailer was measured by a four-item measurement adopted from Helgeson and Supphellen's (2004) research. Bitner (1992) separates the physical retail environment into three categories: ambient conditions, spatial, layout, and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts; and totally there are 22 items to specifically measure these aspects. However, the focus of current research was on the visual servicescapes. Therefore, the three-item scale that measures signs, symbols, and artifacts (Bitner, 1992) were used in this study. The six-item scale that measures ambient conditions, and spatial, layout, and functionality for servicescapes was adopted from Brady and Cronin (2001). Consumers' attitudes toward servicescapes were measured by a three-item scale (Brady and Cronin, 2001). Consumers' involvement was measured by Zaichkowsky's (1985) 6-item scale. Five types of consumer-retailer relationships were measured on scales developed in this research on the basis of Breazeale and Ponder's (2013) exploratory work. All measures were on seven-point Likert scale (anchored 1=strongly agree, 7=strongly disagree)

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Study 1

The sample consisted of 47 participants (aged 18 years and over, 60% male). Study 1 analyses were performed using the SPSS software. Factor analyses and reliability tests were conducted respectively for each scale. Factor analyses for each scale were checked based on the number of factors extracted, and the total variance explained by the factors. The number of factors extracted was evaluated based on eigenvalue above one, and the "elbow" of screen plot.

Internal consistency reliability for each scale was checked based on Cronbach's Alpha value. The cutoff for Cronbach's Alpha is .70, and any value above .70 is considered reliable. The correlations below .30 indicate little if any (linear) correlation. Finally, a one-way ANOVA analysis was performed to test the homogeneity of variances across images.

There were six items measuring "perfect matches" including BM1, BM2, BM3, BM4, BM5, and BM6. The number of factors extracted based on the criteria was 2. The two-factor solution explained 85.24% of variance, while the one-factor solution explained 67.65% of variance. Among the items, BM1 loaded strongly on the component 2. In the reliability test, the Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was .895; however, BM1 correlated weakly with other items, especially with MB3 (.174) and MB4 (.089). Moreover, if deleting MB1 the Cronbach's Alpha would increase to .928.

The scale measuring "mismatches" had five items (MIS1, MIS2, MIS3, MIS4, and MIS5). The number of factors extracted from the items was 1. The one-factor solution explained 56.14% of variance. In the reliability test, the Cronbach's Alpha for "mismatches" was .787; however, MIS4 correlated with other items weakly, especially with MIS1 (.274), MIS2 (.271). According to item-total statistics form, if deleting MIS4, the Cronbach's Alpha would be .806.

There were four items in the scale that measured "fair-weather friends" including FAIR1, FAIR2, FAIR3, and FAIR4. The number of factors extracted was 1 factor. The one-factor solution only explained 49.36% of variance. The Cronbach's Alpha value for this scale was .631, so this scale might not be reliable. FAIR1 weakly correlated with all the other items, accordingly FAIR2 (.139), FAIR3 (.286), and FAIR4 (.21). Even eliminated FAIR1, the Cronbach's Alpha value (.663) is still lower than .70. However, this might be due to small sample size.

The scale measuring "best friends" had four items (BF1, BF2, BF3, and BF4). There was

one factor extracted. The one-factor solution explained over 81.08% of variance. The Cronbach's Alpha is .917; moreover, all items correlated significantly with each other. Hence, this scale appeared to be reliable.

There were five items for the scale that measured "acquaintance" including AQ1, AQ2, AQ3, AQ4, and AQ5. There were 2 factors extracted from the items. The two-factor solution explained totally 73.27% of variance, while the one-factor solution explained 53.12% of variance. AQ4 loaded strongly in the second component (.962). The Cronbach's Alpha for this scale was .764; nevertheless, AQ4 correlated weakly with all other items, respectively AQ1 (.192), AQ2 (.25), AQ3 (.095), and AQ5 (.029). Moreover, after removing AQ4, the Cronbach's Alpha value would be increase to .821.

The Table 2 below contains the information about the number of factors extracted; total variance explained by the factors, and Cronbach's Alpha values for the rest of the scales. The scale measuring signs, symbols, and artifacts had the Cronbach's Alpha value less than .70, which might be due to the small sample size.

Table 2
The Results of Factor Analysis and Reliability Test in Study 1

Scale	Component	Total variance explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude to servicescapes	1	87.37%	.927
Ambient condition	1	87.43%	.992
Space and function	1	76.81%	.847
Signs symbols and artifacts	1	59.42%	.628
SIC	1	88.83%	.937
Attitude to retailer	1	87.06%	.947
Involvement level	1	82.43%	.957

In sum, Study 1 established the dimensionality and reliability of the scales used in this research.

The results of one-way ANOVA analysis show that except for the scale that measured signs, symbols, and artifacts, all other scales were not significant. Thus, indicates there was no significant difference in the means of those scales across five-store images. Whereas, scale means of signs, symbols, and artifacts for image “Roots” was significantly different from that of image “Bath and Body Works” and “Costco”. The reason probably was that the image “Roots” displayed relatively monotonic and simple signs than other stores. Thus, the samples for the five images appeared to have equal variance.

5.2 Study 2

The sample consisted of 266 participants (aged above 18, 44% female). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the retail image conditions (cell sizes: Roots = 51, Bath and Body Works = 49, Costco = 58, Shoppers’ Drug Mart = 50, and Wal-Mart = 58). The procedures used in study 1 were adopted in this study. The Table 3 below shows the results of factor analyses and reliability tests.

Table 3
The Results of Factor Analysis and Reliability Test in Study 2

Scale	Component	Total variance explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude to servicescapes	1	84.79%	.91
Ambient condition	1	84.73%	.908
Space Layout and function	1	77.38%	.851
Signs and symbols	1	68.09%	.764
SIC	1	86.97%	.925
Attitude to retailer	1	85.36%	.941
Involvement level	1	81.63%	.955
Perfect matches	1	66%	.894
Mismatches	1	60%	.835
Fair-weather friend	1	61.57%	.791
Best friend	1	76.16%	.892
Acquaintance	1	49.06%	.718

The scale items for each scale loaded on one component respectively. Except for scale items measuring “Acquaintance”, all the other scales were reliable. Even though, the Cronbach’s Alpha value for “Acquaintance” was above .70, the total variance explained by one component was relatively low (49.06%). Moreover, items AQ3 and AQ4 were correlated weakly (less than .30) with the rest of the items; therefore AQ3 and AQ4 might not measure the same thing as the rest of the scale. After ran a regression analysis using AQ4 as dependent variable, the value of R square was $.045 < .05$ (.05 is the criteria for low prediction of variability), so AQ4 did not predict much of the variance. Furthermore, deleting AQ4 would increase the Cronbach’s Alpha value to .765. Yet, AQ3 still showed weak correlations with other items in the scale, and all the

correlation values with other items are lower than .30. In addition, if deleting AQ3, the Cronbach's Alpha value would increase to .825. After eliminated AQ4 and AQ3, the results of factor analysis and reliability test for "Acquaintance" were listed in the Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1
Factor Analysis and Reliability Test
Excluded AQ3 & AQ4

Scale	Component	Total variance explained	Cronbach's Alpha
Acquaintance (excluded items: AQ3 ① and AQ4 ②)	1	78.85%	.828

①AQ3: The store's typical patron doesn't matter to me.

②AQ4: I will enter the store due to necessity.

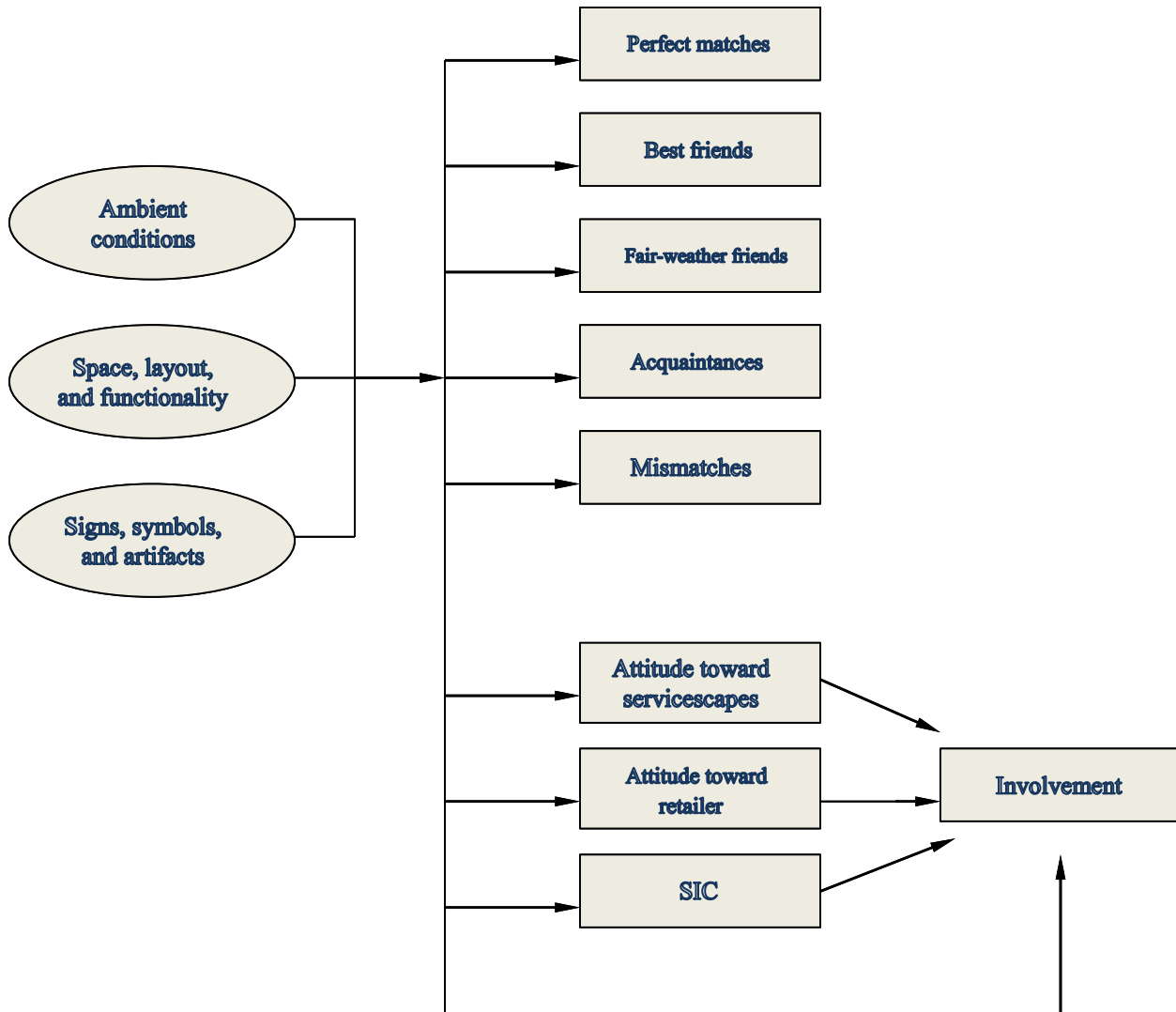
Afterward, a one-way ANOVA analysis was performed. The Table 4 below shows the results of the test of homogeneity variances.

Table 4
Test of Homogeneity of Variances
Across Images

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
meanBM	.590	4	261	.670
meanMIS	.470	4	261	.758
meanFAIR	.788	4	261	.534
meanBF	.977	4	261	.420
meanAQ	1.495	4	261	.204
meanSERVICESCAPE	.650	4	261	.627
meanAMBIENT	1.574	4	261	.182
meanDESIGN	1.271	4	261	.282
meanSIGNS	2.170	4	261	.073
meanSIC	.799	4	261	.527
meanATTITUDE	1.919	4	261	.108
meanINVOLVEMENT	1.041	4	261	.386

Results of Levene's tests suggest that variances did not differ across image conditions.

Figure 1
Conceptual Map for Regression Analysis



The conceptual map shows the regression paths for current research. The first part of the conceptual map was using retail environmental cues to predict five types of consumer-retailer relationship, consumers' attitudes toward the retailer, consumers' attitudes toward servicescapes, consumers' perceptions of SIC, and consumers' involvement. The results for the regression analyses show in the Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.1
The Results of Regression Analysis
(Environmental Cues)

	Ambient conditions				Space, layout, functionality				Signs and symbols			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig	B	Std. Error	Beta	Sig	B	Std. Error	Beta	SIG
Perfect matches	.369	.060	.445	P< .05	.287	.065	.328	P< .05	.120	.045	.119	P< .05
Mismatches	.057	.103	.064	P>.05	-.401	.112	-.425	P< .05	-.144	.78	-.132	P> .05
Fair-weather friend	.308	.057	.378	P< .05	.323	.062	.376	P< .05	.158	.043	.16	P< .05
Best friend	.385	.055	.445	P< .05	.334	.6	.366	P< .05	.135	.042	.127	P< .05
Acquaintance	-.214	.099	-.206	P< .05	-.367	.108	-.336	P< .05	-.26	.075	-.207	P< .05
Service scape attitude	.545	.055	.54	P< .05	.37	.06	.347	P< .05	.09	.041	.073	P< .05
SIC	.543	.08	.499	P< .05	.337	.087	.294	P< .05	.111	.06	.084	P> .05
Attitude to retailer	.536	.061	.547	P< .05	.343	.066	.332	P< .05	.049	.046	.041	P> .05
Involvement	.45	.074	.424	P< .05	.459	.081	.410	P< .05	.066	.056	.051	P> .05

Environmental cues had different levels of influences on consumer-retailer relationship formation. P-value and unstandardized coefficient were checked in the regression analyses.

All of the three types of environmental cues had significant impacts on the formation of perfect matches relationship between consumers and retailers. Ambient conditions had the strongest influences on the relationship, since the unstandardized coefficient was .445, which was greater than the space, layout, and functionality (.328), and signs, symbols, and artifacts (.119).

Likewise, the three types of environmental cues also influenced the formation of “best friend” relationship significantly. The main predictor was ambient conditions, which had unstandardized coefficient of .445.

The influences of the three types of environmental cues were noteworthy as well on the

formation of “fair-weather friends” relationship. The unstandardized coefficients for ambient conditions, space, layout and functionality, and signs and symbols were .378, .376, and .160 respectively.

The formation of “acquaintance” relationship was negatively affected by the three environmental cues. Among the effects, space, layout, and functionality had the strongest negative impacts (-.336), whereas ambient conditions (-.206) and signs, symbols, and artifacts (-.207) had equally negative impacts.

The only significant type of environmental cues that influenced “mismatches” relationship was space, layout, and functionality, which had the unstandardized coefficient of -.425.

The impacts of all three types of environmental cues were significant on consumers’ attitudes toward servicescapes. Ambient conditions were the primary predictors (.54).

A store’s ambient conditions (.499) and space, layout, and functionality (.294) had significant impacts on consumers’ perceptions of self-image congruency.

Signs, symbols, and artifacts dimension was the only type of environmental cue that did not have significant impacts on consumers’ attitudes toward the retailer.

Signs and symbols did not have significant impacts on consumers’ involvement as well. Ambient conditions (.424) and space, layout, and functionality (.410) had similar strength of impacts.

The second part of the conceptual map used consumers’ perceptions to predict consumer behavior (involvement).

Table 5.2
The Results of Regression Analyses
(Consumers' Perceptions)

Involvement	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Attitude to servicescapes	.823	.040	.783	P< .05
SIC	.828	.032	.848	P< .05
Attitude to retailer	.93	.034	.859	P< .05

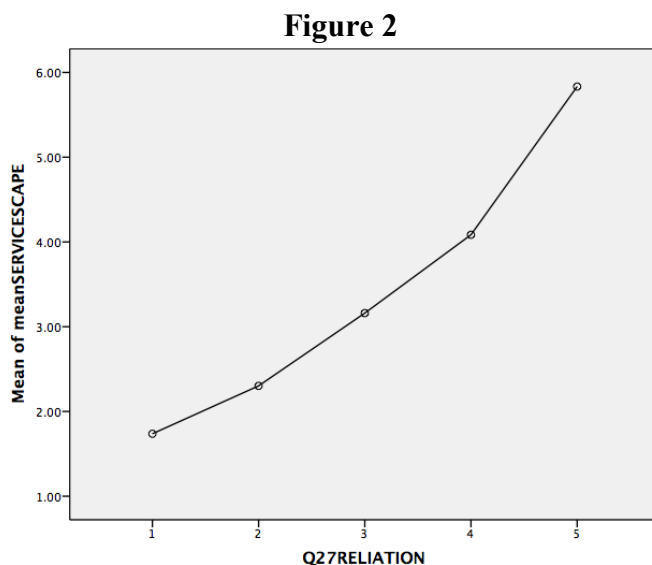
Consumers' attitudes toward servicescapes and the retailer, and consumers' perceptions of SIC all had strong influences on consumers' involvement level.

Previously, the study provides definitions for five distinct types of consumer-retailer relationship. Participants were asked to self-evaluate their relationships with the retailer that presented in the questionnaire. There were 19 participants defined themselves as "perfect matches", 64 participants as "best friends", 109 participants as "fair-weather friends", 59 participants as "best friends", and 16 participants as "mismatches" with the retailer. One-way ANOVA was conducted to measure the equal variance among consumers' attitudes to servicescapes, consumers' attitudes to the retailer, consumers' perceptions of SIC, and consumers' involvement across five consumer-retailer relationship types. The results show in the Table 6 below.

Table 6
Test of Homogeneity of Variances
Across Relationships

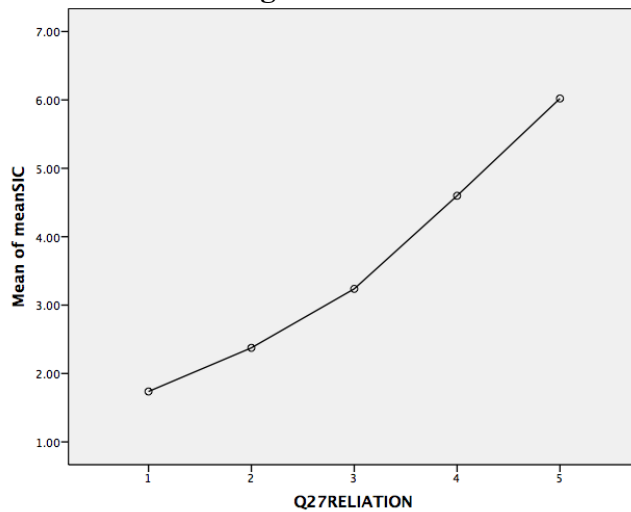
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
meanSERVICESCAPE	3.356	4	261	.011
meanSIC	6.208	4	261	.000
meanATTITUDE	9.266	4	261	.000
meanINVOLVEMENT	3.915	4	261	.004

It shows that data did not have equal variance across five types of consumer-retailer relationships. It was the case for all four dependent variables that only the “perfect matches” group and “best friends” group had equal variance. Therefore, there were no significant differences between the means of these two groups. Thus, it might not be required to account “perfect matches” and “best friends” as two separate groups. However, the equal variance across “perfect matches” and “best friends” might due to a small population in the “perfect matches” group since it was hard to calculate the differences with a small population. The comparisons for the means consumers’ attitudes to servicescape and the retailer, and consumers’ perceptions of SIC, and consumers’ involvement show in the Figure 2, 3, 4, and 5.



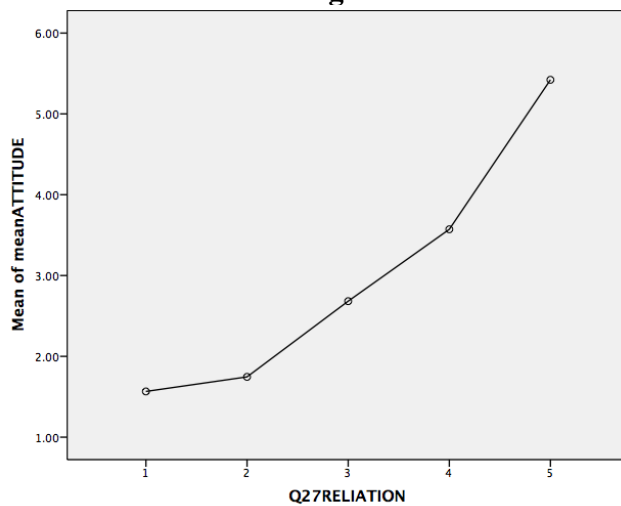
In the Figure 2, the horizontal axis indicates five types of relationships (1= perfect matches, 2=best friend, 3=fair-weather friend, 4=acquaintance, 5=best friend) arranging from the closest to the least close, while the vertical axis indicates consumers’ attitudes toward servicescapes, the higher the number, the more negative the attitudes. Thus, Figure 2 reveals that decreasing with consumer-retailer closeness, consumers’ attitudes toward servicescapes decreases.

Figure 3



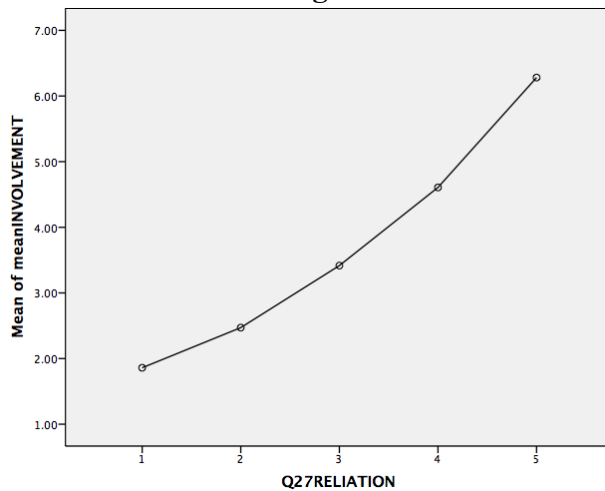
The horizontal axis indicates five types of relationships, while the vertical axis indicates consumers' perceptions of SIC. The Figure 3 illustrates that the consumer-retailer closeness decreases; and the consumers' perceptions of self-image congruency reduces along with it.

Figure 4



The horizontal axis indicates five types of relationships, while the vertical axis indicates consumers' attitudes toward the retailer. The Figure 4 states that decrease with consumer-retailer closeness, the consumers' attitudes toward the retailer reduce as well.

Figure 5



The horizontal axis indicates five types of relationships, while the vertical axis indicates consumers' involvement level. The Figure 5 shows that the closeness of consumer-retailer relationship reduces; the involvement level of consumer becomes lower.

A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to verify the 5-factor solution for consumer-retailer relationships. The total variance explained was 72.56%. Table 7 shows the structure matrix below.

Table 7
Confirmatory Analysis Structure Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q3BM1	.565	.031	.459	.852	-.320
Q4BM2	.757	-.186	.695	.388	-.476
Q5BM3	.457	-.116	.895	.343	-.389
Q6BM4	.494	-.131	.891	.346	-.402
Q7BM5	.652	-.091	.819	.431	-.509
Q8BM6	.750	-.032	.623	.436	-.480
Q9MIS1	-.269	.466	-.211	-.863	.385
Q10MIS2	-.350	.679	-.378	-.377	.549
Q11MIS3	-.363	.647	-.464	-.259	.690
Q12MIS4	-.173	.834	-.090	-.305	.274
Q13MIS5	-.328	.639	-.375	-.309	.739
Q14FAIRE1	.706	-.088	.622	.395	-.506
Q15FAIRE2	.841	-.206	.347	.418	-.397
Q16FAIRE3	.575	-.099	.602	.223	-.495
Q17FAIRE4	.611	.187	.714	.338	-.470
Q18BF1	.718	.080	.725	.471	-.528
Q19BF2	.812	.104	.575	.425	-.444
Q20BF3	.845	-.135	.572	.400	-.501
Q21BF4	.828	-.093	.592	.493	-.564
Q22AQAIN1	-.407	.194	-.414	-.386	.845
Q23AQAIN2	-.598	.403	-.508	-.469	.841
Q26AQAIN5	-.608	.326	-.284	-.330	.773

There were a few items that had the issue of cross loading heavily (above 0.5). For example, BM1 loaded highly on both component 1 and component 4. Moreover, almost all the items measuring “fair-weather friends”, and “best friends” loaded highly on component 1. Therefore, five factors were not distinctively different from one another.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

This research demonstrates that that retail environmental cues influence consumer-retailer relationships. The three types of visual environmental cue examined in this research (i.e., ambient conditions, space, layout, and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts) affected

the formation of “perfect matches”, “best friends”, “fair-weather friends”, “acquaintances”, and “mismatches” consumer-retailer relationships, as well as consumers’ attitudes toward the servicescape and retailer, consumers’ perceptions of SIC, and consumers’ involvement.

Results of this research indicate that ambient conditions had the strongest influences on the formations of “perfect matches”, “best friends”, and “fair-weather friend”, whereas signs, symbols, and artifacts had the least influence on these three relationship types. However, space, layout, and functionalities had strong negative influences on the formations of “mismatches” and “acquaintance”. Consumers’ attitudes toward the retailer and servicescapes, consumers’ perceptions of SIC, and consumers’ involvement were mainly affected by ambient conditions in a store. Moreover, consumers’ attitudes to servicescapes, consumers’ perceptions of SIC, and consumers’ attitudes toward the retailer affected consumers’ involvement behavior.

These findings contribute to current understandings of the impact of retail environments on consumer responses. This is one of the first studies to relate retail environmental cues to consumer-retailer relationships and propose a scale to measure five types of such relationships. This research also provides some initial guidelines for retailers who wish to foster consumer-retailer relationships. This study suggests that ambient conditions, space, layout, and functionality of a store are important attributes for consumers to form relationships with retailers, positive attitudes and higher involvement levels. This study also supports that consumers with different levels of consumer-retailer relationships exhibit differential responses toward the retailers. The closer the relationships, the more positive the attitudes are toward a retailer and its servicescapes, and the higher the consumers’ perceptions of SIC, the higher the involvement level. Hence, retailers could benefit from efforts to provide a pleasant store atmosphere and careful design of store layout and function.

7. Limitations and Future Implication

A few limitations associated with this research have to be acknowledged. First, two consumer samples were recruited in a North American context; however, they might not necessarily represent a cross-section of North America consumers. Moreover, the samples were from an online panel, although participants were geographically diverse, this research still has limited generalizability.

The five images used in this study only account for a small portion of VRS prevalent in the retail industry. All retailers depicted in images included in this research carry fast-moving consumer goods in physical stores. Hence, an extension of an investigation to other retail industries would be insightful. It is also important to acknowledge that the images used in the research were from retailers that consumers likely encounter in real life. Although the images were processed to remove identifying information, an effect of familiarity or knowledge of these retailers on consumer responses observed in this research cannot be completely ruled out.

The scale developed in this research was based on Breazeale and Ponder's (2013) content analyses. Although the scales showed the expected dimensionality and good reliability, some items had to be dropped due to low item-to-total correlations and low factor loadings. It is necessary to further validate the scales in future studies involving new consumer samples and VRS stimuli.

There are several avenues for future research arising from the findings. The consumer-retailer relationship measurement developed in the current study could be a useful tool to examine antecedents, outcomes, moderators, and the processes underlying consumer-retailer relationship types further.

The current research suggests that store environmental cues, especially ambient conditions,

and space, layout, and functionality of a store influence consumer perceptions. The current research relied on images that presented a gestalt and as such did not manipulate specific dimensions or levels of store environmental cues. Future researchers could look into the effects of the specific aspects of all the environmental cues, such as lighting, color, background music, floor texture, and decoration on consumers' responses and resulting consumer-retailer relationships. Moreover, future researchers could study the influences of the human element (i.e., employees, other customers) on consumer perceptions of the servicescapes and consumer-retailer relationships.

Finally, this research indicates that consumers' involvement increases along with consumers' perceptions (SIC, and consumers' attitudes toward servicescapes and the retailer), and is also influenced by retail environmental cues. It would be important to establish the effects of these variables on behavioral outcomes, such as frequency of shopping at the store, or money and time spent at the store. The current research suggests that such investigations may be fruitful.

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Bath Body and Works retailer. Digital image.
http://www.moodiereport.com/images3/Bath&Body_Works_0315_600_1.jpg

Costco retailer. Digital image. May 2015
<http://bulktraveler.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Costco-St.-Charles-Pharmacy-BulkTraveler.jpg>

Roots retailer. Digital image.
https://farm6.staticflickr.com/5820/20842781386_7956bc858c_h.jpg

Shoppers' Drug Mart retailer. Digital image. 15th August 2012
http://wattisretail.com/images/projects/201208151209_ShoppersDrugMart-Web5.jpg

The globe and mail (2013)
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-magazine/top-1000/rankings-by-industry/article12870820/>

Wal-Mart retailer. Digital image.

<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/5418e7ffe4b07990c7fccac8/t/546119f0e4b09fab6f86d3b1/1415647348261/wal-mart-exp-reno-005.jpg?format=1500w>

Appendix

IMAGES USED IN THE STUDY



Roots



Bath and Body Works



Costco



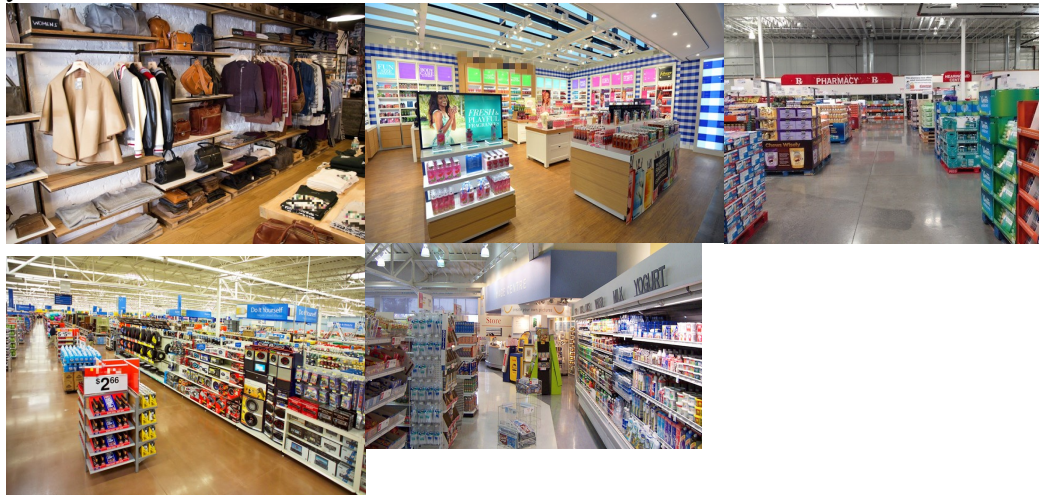
Wal-Mart



Shoppers' Drug Mart

QUESTIONNAIRE PART 1

Please have a look at the following image and respond to the following items based on the image you see.



The retailer's personality is very similar to mine.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The shopping experience in this store will be extremely good.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store makes an effort to make the servicescape appealing to me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store makes an effort to make the store environment appealing to me.

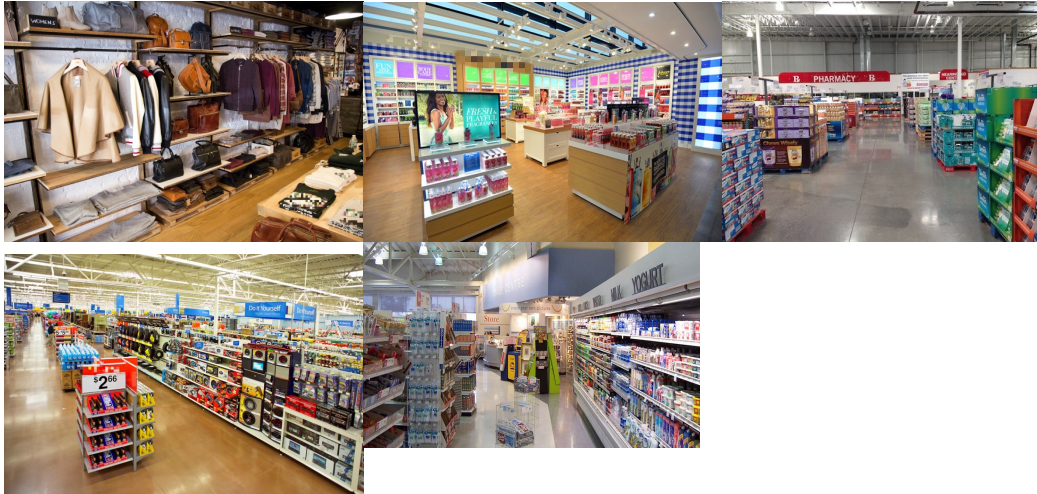
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store's surroundings making me feel good.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This store makes me proud to be its customer.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



The retailer's personality is different from mine.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This store makes me not want to return.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store's surroundings make me feel bad.

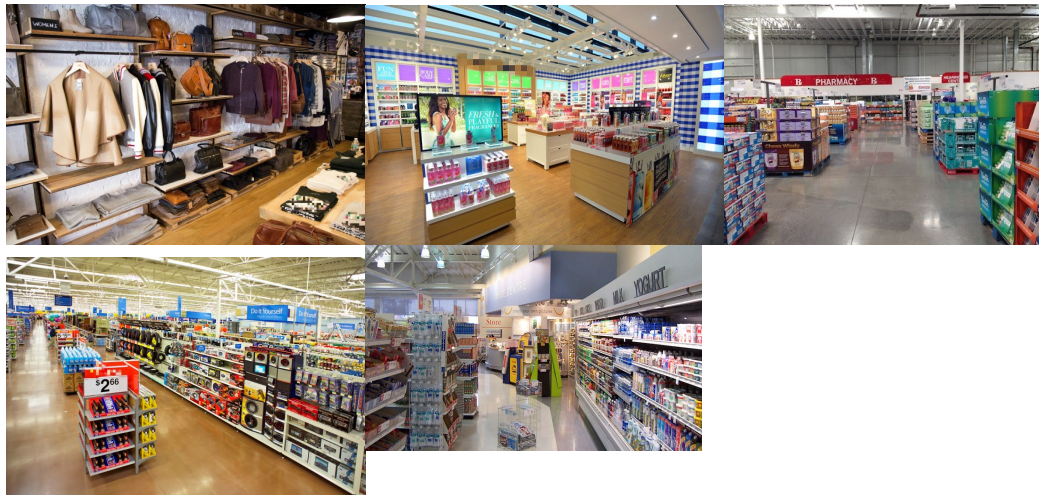
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This retailer tries to be more than it can deliver.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This store makes me feel like I do not like its consumers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



The store's surroundings making me feel comfortable.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I will shop in this store in spite of other consumers' influences.

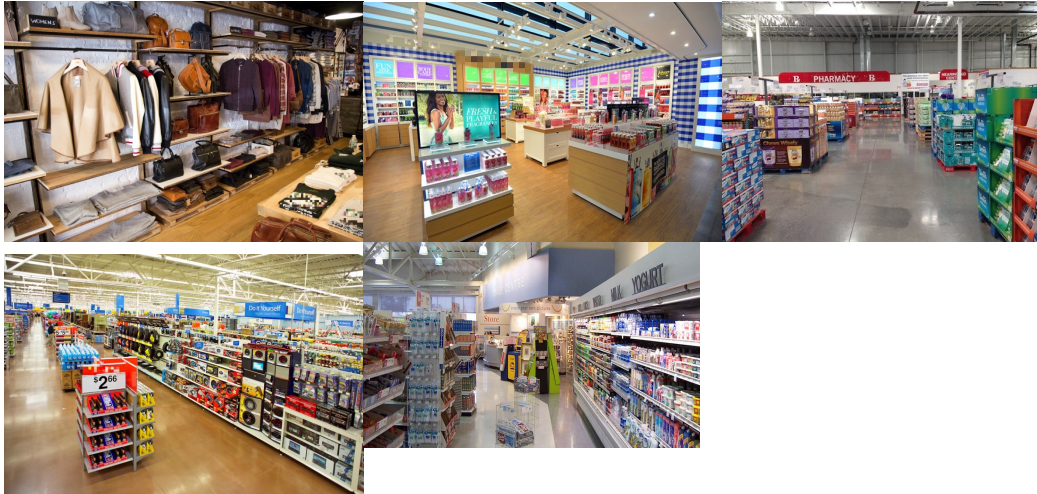
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store's product organization allows me to identify the location of products easily.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store atmosphere is the reason why I enter this store.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



The store's physical facilities making me feel good.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To me, this store is one of the best in the industry.

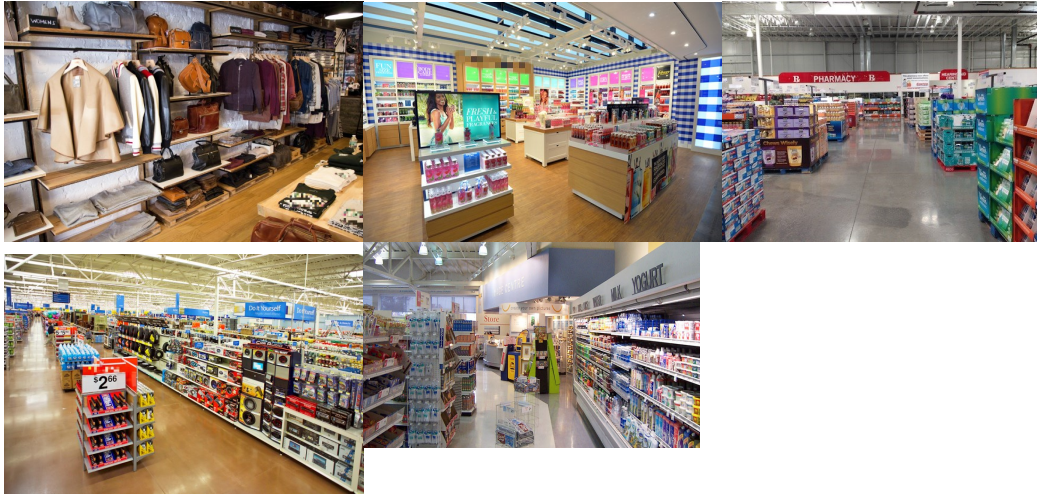
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To me, this store seems reliable.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

This store delivers broad appeal to me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7



This store's surroundings making me feel nothing.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store is not appealing to me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The store's typical patron doesn't matter to me.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I will enter the store due to necessity.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I will not stay in the store for long.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Disagree somewhat	Undecided	Agree somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

QUESTIONNAIRE PART 2

First read the following definitions for the five types of relationship, and then answer the question:

“Perfect matches” describe the closest type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers display extremely positive attitudes toward a retailer, the retailer’s physical surroundings, the retailer’s typical patron, and the shopping experience with the retailer, and recognize and confirm the retailer’s efforts. The consumers’ personalities match the personalities of the retailer.

“Best friends” describe the second closest type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers feel hopeful with the physical settings of a retailer; they find the retailer is better than others; they pay attention to the functionality and benefits offered by the retailer; and they perceive the retailer as appealing to broad categories of consumers.

“Faire-Weather friends” describe the third closest type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers have both positive and negative attitudes toward a retailer and the retailer’s typical patron; however, consumers still show great interest in the retailer’s physical surroundings, and they are willing to patronize the store even though they do not need anything from the retailer.

“Acquaintances” describe the second least close type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers are disinterested in a retailer, the retailer’s physical surroundings, and the retailer’s typical patron. They seem over stimulated by the store’s physical surroundings and they will enter the store conditionally.

“Mismatches” describe the least close type of consumer-retailer relationship. Consumers display great negative attitudes toward a retailer, the retailer’s physical surroundings, the retailer’s typical patron and the shopping experience with the retailer. The consumers’ personalities do not match the personalities of the retailer.

Please consider the following image and respond to the question below.



I would describe my relationship with this retailer as:

Perfect matches (Closest)

Best friends

Faire-Weather friends

Acquaintances

Mismatches (The least close)

DESCRIPTIVE TABLE

	Roots		Bath Works	Body and	Costco		Shopper's Drug Mart		Wal-Mart	
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation
Perfect matches	3.08	1.26	2.51	.99	2.94	1.18	3.09	1.17	2.63	1.09
Best friends	3.50	1.38	2.79	1.09	2.97	1.10	3.29	1.20	3.01	1.19
Fair-Weather friends	3.19	1.24	2.63	1.06	2.78	1.00	3.14	1.17	2.85	1.16
Acquaintances	4.11	1.62	4.66	1.48	4.66	1.36	4.23	1.39	4.68	1.34
Mismatches	4.52	1.32	4.97	1.24	5.14	1.10	4.53	1.25	5.04	1.24
SIC	3.68	1.57	3.24	1.48	3.22	1.34	3.35	1.63	3.48	1.58
Servicescapes attitude	3.58	1.38	2.62	1.17	3.27	1.42	3.52	1.53	3.10	1.37
Retailer attitude	2.91	1.36	2.28	1.10	2.60	1.21	2.97	1.41	2.92	1.53
Involvement	3.75	1.59	3.19	1.29	3.30	1.45	3.75	1.47	3.59	1.53
Ambient conditions	3.27	1.43	2.56	1.08	3.22	1.37	3.25	1.48	3.19	1.48
Space layout and functionality	3.50	1.40	2.73	1.10	3.05	1.33	3.40	1.41	3.05	1.26
Sign symbols and artifacts	3.49	1.26	2.30	.95	2.48	1.10	2.39	.95	2.27	1.00